

Thunder Stick

THE JOURNAL OF VANCOUVER M.E.N.

Premiere Edition

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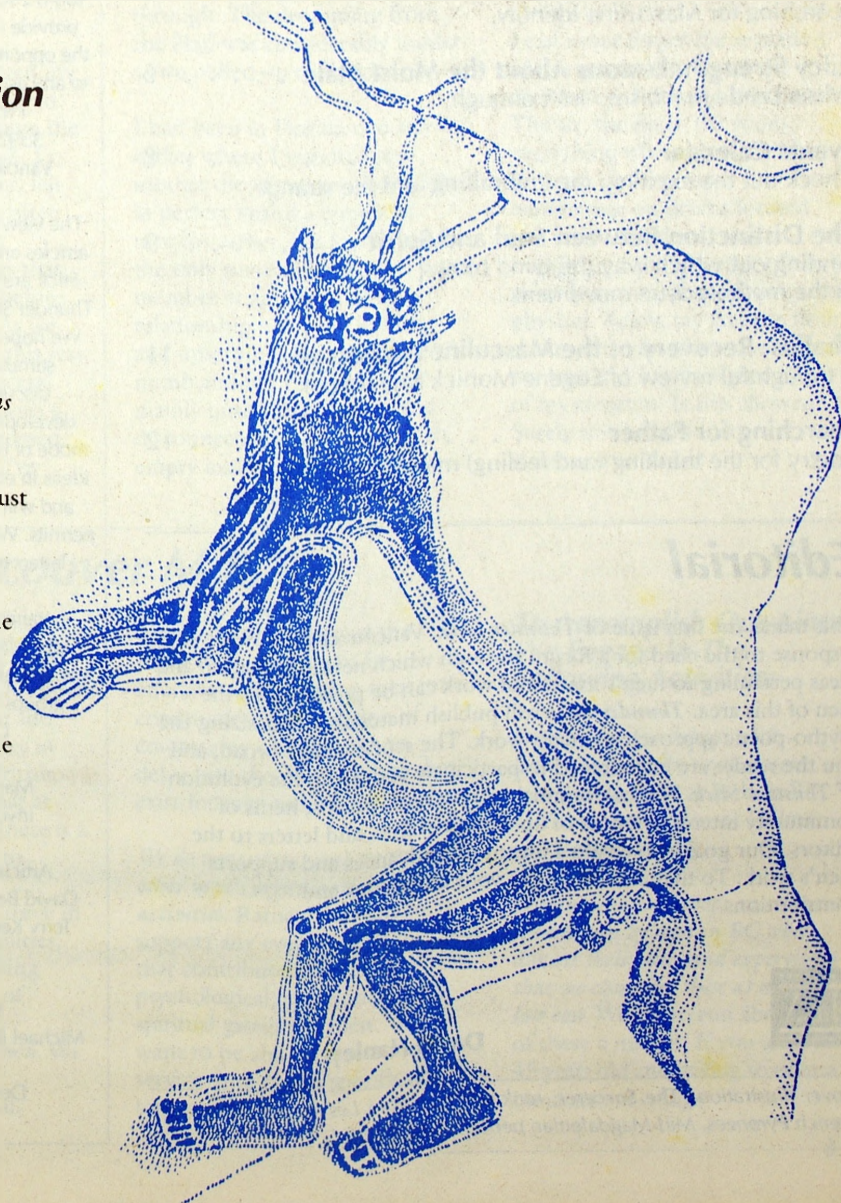
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Editorial

This marks the first issue of *Thunder Stick*, Vancouver M.E.N.'s response to the need for a forum through which new information and ideas pertaining to men's inner soul work can be presented to the men of this area. *Thunder Stick* will publish materials emphasizing the mytho-poetic approach to men's work. The scope will be broad, and you the reader are encouraged to participate actively in the evolution of *Thunder Stick*. We seek original manuscripts, poems, items of community interest, notices of upcoming events, and letters to the editors. Our goal is to create a forum that advances and supports men's work. To that end, we invite your comments and contributions.

David Hanley



Cover illustration: **The Sorcerer**, rock painting from Les Trois Frères caves, French Pyrenees. Mid-Magdalenian period, c. 14,000 B.C.

Thunder Stick

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Thunder Stick is a publication of the Vancouver Men's Evolutionary Network (M.E.N.). Further information is available by calling (604) 290-9988. This number will provide updated event news and the opportunity to direct a message to any aspect of Vancouver M.E.N.

Please direct mail to:
**3392 West 34th Avenue,
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The views expressed in the letters, articles and advertising of Thunder Stick are not necessarily those of Thunder Stick or Vancouver M.E.N. We hope that this newsletter will stimulate thought, provoke discussion and further the development of a positive male mode of being. We welcome your ideas in either article or letter form and will publish them as space permits. We reserve the right to edit letters and articles submitted.

Vancouver M.E.N. would appreciate any information our readers can supply regarding men's groups and contacts in other Canadian cities.

Many thanks to those involved in this issue:

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Beginnings

Terry Keenhan

In February 1989 I attended the five day Pacific Northwest Conference near Seattle led by Robert Bly, Michael Meade, Robert Moore and Doug VonKoss.

Several smiling men greeted my two companions like long lost brothers as we walked down the dirt road towards the Hall. I didn't recognize them and felt excluded, cut off, like so often before. My friend was so exuberant in his greetings that an image of loss flashed before my eyes and I felt envy. As we neared the log structure this was replaced by a sense of visceral unease. Why was I here with a hundred other men? I seemed out of place. All my life I've

avoided large groups as well as personal growth work. I didn't feel ready now. I came only because my friend challenged me when I hedged on carrying through. The drumming from the Hall was considerably louder as we pulled up to the doors.

I had been in Florida two weeks earlier where I watched my mother die of cancer. Seemingly in perfect health a couple of months earlier, her loss left me the only surviving family member at age forty. Our relationship had been intense and unsettling. Yet now I was numb and felt very little, just mainly untouched, unreal and disconnected. Most of all, I felt empty inside. Not wanting to

stand out as everybody was greeting everybody else outside the door, I stepped forward, opened one of the doors and stepped through.

I can never forget the sensation of raw power that struck me in the chest as I entered that room. The air, the floor, the room; everything vibrated to the beat of thirty or forty men hammering on drums located just inside the door, each building on the intensity of the next. It is more than electric; it's physical. Below my feet the floor shakes, the vibration travels up my legs and I feel a tightening of my scrotum. Is this allowed? Surely this is forbidden.

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About Vancouver M.E.N.

Vancouver M.E.N. is a network of volunteers. Our goal is to provide information and services for men's activities in the lower mainland of British Columbia. We believe that at this time in our culture there is a profound need for men to rediscover the roots of masculinity as a positive force in our families and communities. We are dedicated to making available the experience of learning and being in community with other men. We have found drumming, storytelling, poetry, ritual,

dance, shared work and the study of mythology to be effective tools to bring men into community. This creation of community enables men to delve into the deeper issues that exist for men today.

We do not seek to compete with other men's organizations and activities. Rather, we want to support any event or activity that contributes to the psychological, emotional and spiritual growth of men. We want to be able to direct men to services and events specifically targeted for men.

To Accomplish Our Aims We Engage In The Following Activities:

Organizing workshops with leading figures in mytho-poetic men's work, such as Robert Bly, Michael Meade, James Hillman and Robert Moore.

Organizing workshops on relevant themes run by men in BC who donate their time and expertise so that we can offer these at a very low cost. We try to run about 1 of these a month. If you are over 45 years old and willing to offer a
Continued next page

Vancouver M.E.N. (Continued)

workshop or seminar please contact us.

We have two regular events: The Men's Wisdom Council meets the first Tuesday of every month at 2021 Columbia St., Vancouver. This is an opportunity for men to speak from the heart about personal and social issues of concern to them in a community of good-hearted men. Meetings begin at 6:45pm with 20-30 minutes of drumming. Bring a percussion instrument of any sort.

Myths after Midnight is run 4 to 6 times a year to coincide with important earth festivals. This is an informal celebration with drumming, dancing, poetry and storytelling. A great opportunity to tap into the "wildman" in each of us. Look in Common Ground magazine for times and locations.

We facilitate the creation of small, self-managing men's groups. These are groups of 5 to 10 men who meet regularly to support and challenge each other in leading fully conscious lives. Men's groups are a safe haven to explore the doubts, fears and failures we "normally" keep buried in ourselves, and they provide a place for joyful camaraderie free of competition. On-going men's groups are the most important vehicle we have for healing the isolation men feel and for helping us discover a grounded sense of the mature masculine.

We maintain a centralized directory of men in the lower

mainland who want to be in a men's group. When we get 6 - 8 men from the same area we mail a letter to each of them with a list of the others and encourage them to start meeting. We offer each group the Handbook for Starting a Men's Group, free of charge. Call us if you'd like to explore being in a men's group or would like a copy of the Handbook.

We publish a *Directory of Men's Services* in the Lower Mainland. This is distributed free of charge and available at the usual outlets. Contact us if you offer a service or have expertise of specific interest to men and want to be listed in the directory.

We are interested in helping any man who has energy and a good idea about providing services for men, especially those consistent with a mytho-poetic orientation to men's work. We do not, however, provide more than moral support to those offering services for profit.

If you want to be on our mailing list and kept informed of upcoming events and activities, write to us at our address or call us and leave your name, address, postal code and phone number. Our phone number will connect you with our "phone box". Please leave a message so that someone from Vancouver M.E.N. can get back to you quickly.

"Ask most any man, 'How does it feel to be a man these days? Do you feel manhood is honored, respected, celebrated'? Those who pause long enough to consider their gut feelings will likely tell you they feel blamed, demeaned, and attacked. But their reactions may be pretty vague. Many men feel as if they are involved in a night battle in a jungle against an unseen foe. Voices from the surrounding darkness shout hostile challenges: 'Men are too aggressive. Too soft. Too insensitive. Too macho. Too power-mad. Too much like little boys. Too wimpy. Too violent. Too obsessed with sex. Too detached to care. Too busy. Too rational. Too lost to lead. Too dead to feel.' Exactly what we are supposed to become is not clear."

Sam Keen, 1991
Fire in the Belly

"We are living at an important and fruitful moment now, for it is clear to men that the images of adult manhood given by the popular culture are worn out; a man can no longer depend on them. By the time a man is thirty-five he knows that the images of the right man, the tough man, the true man which he received in high school do not work in life. Such a man is open to new visions of what a man is or could be."

Robert Bly, 1990
Iron John

Searching For Masculine Identity

A Conversation with Guy Corneau

Michael Bertrand

When a man starts to come into contact with the need to change, to find out what it means to be a man, issues with his father often arise first. The unresolved conflicts, the embittered resentments, the emotional or physical (or both) abandonment are there to look at.

Guy Corneau, a Jungian analyst, writer and speaker on men's issues form Quebec has written a best selling book on the subject, *Absent Fathers, Lost Sons: The Search for Masculine Identity*. Newly published in English, the book is a fearless journey into the "deep manure" of men coming to terms with their fathers.

I talked with Corneau recently in Montreal. He says there is a fragility to the masculine identity that men try to cover up. The absence of a relationship with a real, present father leads to the growing of a carapace, a shell. "To be a man is to amputate sensitivity, because men who have missed the father fear intimacy." These men may also, he says, have the experience of being driven into the realm of the "devouring mother," and their reaction is to cover up even further emotionally.

"Men become stuck in the public image of prestige and power because of the need to appear like a 'man'. Missing the

personal father, they embrace the cultural stereotypes, such as Rambo, or gang membership, or the soft male or the hard father."

When asked about any differences he sees between Quebecois men and other North



Guy Corneau, Jungian Analyst and author of *Absent Fathers, Lost Sons*

American men, he says that there are similar problems of intimacy, bodily contact, fathers and mother. "It's only a question of a bit different colouring. Where the puritan ethic, with all its rules, etc., is more important in English North America, in Quebec a man's more coloured by depression, because of the historical background of a conquered people, and because of a lower profile *vis a vis* women and the English."


Corneau says he sees much greater differences when working with European men, where "the story between men

and women is much more constructed and rigid."

So what are some remedies for this lack of emotionality? Corneau sees great value in men meeting in support groups, for the opportunity to explore issues and let go of some of that shell.

He also is heartened that more and more men are taking part in parents' meeting at schools, that "they are showing that they know the importance and the pleasures of taking greater interest in their children, that this has a place in their lives." He encourages men to show whatever they know to their sons, and that they as fathers love their sons the way they are.

Men are becoming part of the culture again in the sense of going inwards and exploring what is there. But Corneau cautions that it will be slow because its going against "thousands of years of surface living." It will take time, as change will come piece by piece as the denial is slowly chipped away.

Guy Corneau will be in Vancouver for a lecture and workshop sponsored by Vancouver M.E.N. June 14-16. See the back cover for more details. His book, *Absent Fathers, Lost Sons*, is published by Shambhala, and is available now in English. 

Juicy Strength: Lessons About the Moist Male

Gervase Bushe

She knew she was pregnant within days of conception. That's how connected to her body she is. We were planning to be married in a few months but children were definitely not part of our plans. There's nothing like a surprise pregnancy to pull the rug out from under a couple in their early thirties who have vowed never to want or to have babies, but that's another story. This is a story about being a man and being strong and some of the lessons to be learned about that.

Initially, in my mind, the solution to the pregnancy was simple and her doctor was very agreeable. I already had a few abortions under my belt and I knew the procedure to be quick and easy. I had heard that abortion extracts a psychological price from women and did not doubt that was true. On the other hand, I had not seen the price paid in my previous encounters.

The sweet, gentle, loving woman I was planning to marry was also one of the toughest, hard-ass managers I'd ever met. She had survived a rough childhood, leaving home at seventeen, and had made her own way in the business world. I was not prepared for the transformation in her. On receiving confirmation of the pregnancy she became withdrawn and depressed, always seeming close to tears.

Her rational mind confronted her with hundreds of reasons why this was not the time for raising children. Yet something was alive in her body. A soul had manifested itself and she could do nothing other than love it. A deep elemental force, call it a mother instinct, demanded that she protect and nurture it at the same time as she was planning to abort it.

It was easy to see that she was troubled and conflicted. I wanted to be comforting. Years of training in 'how to be a man' were brought to bear. Detached, logical analyses were given in soothing tones, always with the admonition to not beat herself up over it. Wanting to protect her from feeling bad, I gave her reasons for not feeling anything. I cited statistics and listed all the reasons why an abortion was alright. This fertilized egg wasn't human, I reasoned, simply a probability and in this case a low one since she still had an IUD implanted. Even if it was a soul it surely didn't expect to be around long if it chose her to manifest inside. Soon, she stopped talking about 'the little soul' but her face did not lose that shadow of deeply felt pain.

The kick in the head came the day I arrived home and found her crying to herself. She had come to the conclusion that I wasn't able to bear her pain so she would wait until I was out of the house to cry. This troubled

me deeply. What kind of partner was I if my woman had to be alone to cry out her grief? An older man helped me to see that I was not helping her in the way she needed. She needed to experience her connection to what was inside her and she needed me to be there with her, honouring and loving the baby, mourning its impending death.

THE BABY! The words could hardly clear my throat. The most I had been able to call it was an *it*. In that moment a profound realization: it was easy to remove a probability; it was very difficult to kill a baby.

I am not sure exactly when or how I learned to be strong and maintain a stiff upper lip by framing my experience in ways that distanced and disconnected me from it. Some came from my parents, no doubt. Some was gradually developed through encounters with playground bullies where the embarrassment of tears stung more than a punch in the shoulder. And some came from the wounds that young girls unconsciously give to confused and scared young boys. Nerves of steel characterized the heroes of my boyhood and I wanted to be a man just like them. I remember one summer when I was about 10, I practised being like Jungle Jim who never showed surprise, fear or anxiety. I did such a good job that I even stopped feeling those things. It used to

Juicy Strength

(Continued)

surprise me when someone would say something like, "you must be anxious about your presentation." I didn't feel any anxiety and didn't understand why anyone would think that. And I would also be surprised when my hands would, for no apparent reason, begin shaking uncontrollably just before an important meeting. Keeping my feelings unconscious kept me in good stead in my career where an ability to meet challenges with emotionless, calm detachment was highly valued. My ability to keep a cool head when others around me were losing theirs had given me a deep, quiet sense of satisfaction and, I think, had been an important foundation for my sense of being a man and being potent.

But now cool detachment was not called for. The woman I loved needed me to share the experience she was going through. All my life I thought a damsel in distress meant I should be 'strong' (that is, unemotional) and protective. What she needed was for me to be heartfelt and loving.

As I reached into my heart I became afraid of what I think haunts just about every man who realizes his strength is a brittle, outer shell: if I go into my feelings and open my heart to this tragedy will I become a weak, blubbering wimp? Fortunately I didn't think about it for long, I simply did. I recognized the baby as a living


human soul whom we were going to destroy. Rather than detaching from the experience I opened my heart to the experience. And I became a weak, blubbering wimp.

For a couple of days neither of us got out of bed much. We shared a great sadness, many tears (mostly hers as I still don't cry very well) and the best sex I'd ever had. I was vaguely aware during this time that she was doing more looking after me than I was looking after her. When the news came that the foetus was lodged in her fallopian tube, could not mature and had to be surgically removed, another transformation occurred. Her spirits soared and she was her old, happy self. I, on the other hand, was still a vegetable. The day she went into the hospital she had to pack us both up and lead me around. It took three days after the operation before I started to feel like myself again.

Through it all she had been strong, capable, looking after me, the baby and herself while still profoundly connected to the horror of the situation; still juicy with human emotion. Watching her and reflecting on my own behavior led me to realize that my strength had no juice to it, just a brittle dryness.

That was many years ago now but the images of juicy strength and brittle strength have never left me. Juicy

strength was the first clear target I had for another way of being a man and the first clear understanding I had of the power of the 'moist male.' Until this experience I knew I was searching for another way of being but I didn't have any clear ideas of what that way of being was. Now it's easy for me to see who has juicy strength and who has brittle strength. The father who feels the grief of the boundary that separates him from his children because he must teach them boundaries; who doesn't rationalize away the pain he feels on those occasions when he must discipline the child - that man has juicy strength. The leader who feels the grief of our forests raped and our environment defiled and feels the despair of men with no work and families afraid of their futures and then makes the hard decisions that must be made by someone has juicy strength.

I don't think a man gets juicy strength until he has, in Robert Bly's words, been initiated into his emotional body. Because they are comfortable in their emotional bodies, men with juicy strength have a different way of 'controlling feelings.' It's not about repressing them, pushing them out of awareness, as I had done. It's more like they don't let their feelings control them. They stay fully in their emotions while still doing what needs to be done. 

Events Calendar

Info: 290-9988



Denotes sponsorship of Vancouver M.E.N.
Unless otherwise noted, events are for men only.

The Father and the King: Conflict and Choice

Mike Raynolds & Doug McKegney

Sunday May 26, 1991

2021 Columbia St., 10am-5pm. Fee: \$10.

Myths and Fairy Tales for Men

A day of stories and storytelling led by *Eric Gordon*
with *George Schwab*. Saturday June 1, 1991

UBC Grad Centre, Patio Room, 9:30am-5:00pm.

Fee: \$25-\$50 (sliding scale). Call Eric (985-5168) for details.

Absent Fathers and Lost Sons

A public presentation for men and women by *Guy Corneau*.

Friday June 14, 1991

Robson Square Media Centre, 7:30pm. Fee: \$12.

Absent Fathers and Lost Sons:

A Workshop for Men with *Guy Corneau*

Saturday June 15 & Sunday June 16, 1991

Student Union Building, UBC. Fee: \$150.

Myths/Masks and Movement

An animal mask-making workshop for men.

Saturday July 13, 1991. UBC Grad Centre, Patio Room.

Fee: \$25-50 (sliding scale). Call George (736-2956) for details.

Wisdom of the Elders

A series of workshops for the Fall of 1991. We are still looking
for men over 70 years willing to participate in the series.

Call Gervase (251-5120) for details.

The Feeling of Myth

An evening for men and women with *James Hillman*.

Friday September 27, 1991

Robson Square Media Centre, 7:30pm. Fee: \$15.

Gods in Bodies:

Men and Women / Mars and Venus

A weekend workshop for men and women with
James Hillman & Debra McCall.

Saturday September 28 (9:30am-5:30pm)

and Sunday September 29 (9:30am-4:00pm), 1991

Fee: \$200. Limited enrollment.

Michael Meade and Robert Moore

Saturday November 16 and Sunday November 17, 1991

Ongoing Events

Men's Wisdom Council

Meets 1st Tuesday of each month
2021 Columbia St. (at 5th Ave.)

Fee: \$3. Meetings begin at
6:45pm with 20 minutes of
drumming.

Myths after Midnight

4 to 6 times per year to coincide
with important earth festivals.

Men's Action Group in Support of Feminist Concerns

To support women's
organizations fighting physical
and sexual abuse of women.
Call Don (576-9706) for details.

Regional Events

Island Men's Network Meeting

Every fourth Monday at
Camosun College, 7:30pm.

Call Jim (383-7664) for details.

Men's Drumming Drop-in

Every second Monday,
beginning April 15, 1991

Call Saul (380-9901) for details.

The Dance of Gender

Michael Meade, Ricardo
Morrison, Clover Catskill

July 12-14, Seattle

Contact LIMBUS

(1-800-233-6984) for details.

Men and Soul

Shepherd Bliss

September 23-28, 1991

Hollyhock Farm, Cortes Island.

Call 935-6465 for details.

The Distinction Between Soul and Spirit

Merve Roy

A few months back I was reading the December edition of *Wingspan*, a long-standing journal for the men's movement, and I came across an article that covered the leadership conference held in Minneapolis last October. Much of the article centred on a question of special relevance at a time of tremendous growth and change in the men's movement: How can the idea of "soul work" at the core of the movement be validly conveyed through various media to a wider audience of men? Paul Feroe, who runs Alley Press, spoke at the conference and urged men to get the word out but to remember that "all this grew out of soul work" and that information about the men's movement is ultimately of little use to men who do not involve themselves in that work.

But what exactly is that (soul) work? Personally, it was only a few months ago that I began to realize the men's movement was much more than a spiritual movement. I had no idea of the soul/spirit dichotomy. To be completely honest I thought they were almost interchangeable. Since the topic is of great importance to men and since there may be men out there who are, as I was, unclear about the concept of soul, I would like to pass on some comments I have heard on the topic from men who have had

much more experience in the movement than I.

It was related to me that at some point in our journey through life we come to a fork and must make a decision to either take the path that leads to the right or the path that leads to the left. Now, the path to the right moves upward (ascends). It moves towards detachment, clear mindedness, being able to see far in a larger vision, to a detachment from emotions, and towards aesthetic values. On the other hand, the path to the left moves down (descends). It moves towards full embodiment, into the thick of things —into deep darkness. The right path has a certain dry, lofty quality to it, while the left goes down into the sticky darkness, into the fecundity of the earth. Spirit is the path to the right and soul the path to the left.

What seems to have happened is that today we have lost the distinction between the soul and the spirit and we tend to move toward spirit, the right path, the high-reaching path of goodness. The left path has become a painful path that is repressed, contains the messes of life, of illness, and the confusions of love. James Hillman suggests that to transcend the conditions of the soul is to lose touch with the soul, and a split-off spirituality, with no influence from the soul, readily falls into extremes of literalism and

destructive fanaticism. Hillman, and other depth psychologists, do not advocate a compensatory move away from spirit into soul, instead they suggest that we follow tradition which teaches that spirit nourishes soul — that spiritual ways of everyday life should feed the soul rather than starve it.

Early in life, when we are still on the hero's journey, we have to take the right path because we must learn how to control our emotions, how to overcome adversity so we may slay our dragons. The movement of the masculine is into the lofty outer world and that movement has to take place successfully before the boy (hero) is ready to move down into the underworld. Moreover, for men who take the journey down too early in life there is a real danger. The time for the left path will come, don't push it.

The myth of Icarus was told to me to explain exactly this phenomenon and I feel it appropriate to quickly go over the story. The Greek archetypal magician Daedalus built himself a pair of wax wings that allowed him to fly — this is the image of the spirit. The king's son, Icarus, saw the wings Daedalus had crafted and wanted a pair for himself so he too could fly. After much persuasion the magician gives in and tells Icarus he will build him a pair of wax
Continued next page

Soul and Spirit

(Continued)

wings but on one condition — that whatever the boy does he is not to fly too high to the sun because the wings will melt. The boy agrees and Daedalus takes him to a cliff and helps him up into the air. But sure enough the boy heads for the sun, the wings melt, he falls into the sea and dies. The moral of the myth is that movement toward spirit can happen at too early of an age, and when that occurs a person can get burned up.


Movement down into the soul is something one has to come to slowly and those most successful at it are usually men who have learned how to participate in the felt experiences of life. Hillman states: "The soul finds its enduring fixity in its salt, in the blood, sweat, and tears of ordinary life. Events have bite and flavour and are taken in with full subjective participation." Recently I was in Seattle to see Robert Bly and Michael Mead and heard Bly tell a story about a young man of about 25 who approached him and asked how he could get started on this journey into the deep masculine. Bly replied: "Just breathe for the next 10 years, then come back."

Does Bly's statement suggest that all 25 year-olds are not ready to begin soul work? Some believe this to be the case but I certainly don't. Many men are ready for the journey early on in life while others will never move past immature boy psychology. There are no simplistic

formulations that posit masculinity as a fixed and definable set of behavioral norms. For thousands of years boys were initiated into manhood at an early age and made the transition from boy to man quite nicely. Today, the problem for men is that we do not know how to move past the spiritual, past lofty "out there" thinking that eventually burns one out. The journey is not to become bigger or better, it's about finding substance (salt) in our lives so we do not have to play a role, believe in a stereotype, or strive for a widespread ideal of what our masculinity should be. Instead we can move into the muddy contexts of the soul in an attempt to rediscover the "essence" of our individual lives so we may find ways of living that are full, empowered, and authentic.

The men's movement gives me a means and a way to look into myself, to understand the unconscious patterns (archetypes) that exist in all of us — for doing soul work. The means is by forming small (groups) and large (networks) communities of men where I can find a "sacred space" to explore and ultimately find the archetypes contained in the collective unconscious. The way to understand these patterns is through the use of ancient ritual, stories, fairy tales, myths, legends and poetry.

As stated at the outset, soul work is at the core of the men's movement and I believe that it is only through this type of work that men will recapture the wholeness and unity that was lost or bring about a healing of the wound. Moreover, I believe this healing process can only happen in a community of men. I can't do soul work by standing in front of a mirror and talking with myself. Bly has said so many times that "being a man" is a historically changing thing; masculinity varies along with social values that allow only certain archetypes to prevail. But one thing is for sure: men aren't initiated into manhood by eating Wheaties, they are initiated into manhood by other men. The men's movement, and in particular the group I belong to, have given me the opportunity to develop my masculine archetypal patterns and to descend into my soul. Most of all, I have been blessed with the ability to actualize intimacy, fulfilment, empowerment, and self-realization which can only be gained through an initiatory process in which the less mature attitudes in my personal conscious (ego) are sacrificed.

In closing, I would like to suggest that for those men interested in discovering more about the images of the spirit and soul that they read "Peaks and Vales" in *A Blue Fire and Re-Visioning Psychology*, by James Hillman. 

Phallos: Recovery of the Masculine Archetype

Eugene Monick. *Phallos: Sacred Image of the Masculine*. Toronto: Inner City Books, 1987.

Gervase Bushe

"To write of archetypal masculinity means to concentrate upon phallos, the erect penis, the emblem and standard of maleness. All images through which masculinity is defined have phallos as their point of reference. Sinew, determination, effectuality, penetration, straightforwardness, hardness, strength – all have phallos giving them effect. Phallos is the fundamental mark of maleness, its stamp, its impression. Erection points to a powerful inner reality at work in a man, not altogether under his control. This inner reality may be different from a man's conscious desires at a given time. Phallos is subjective authority for a male, and objective for those who come into contact with him. This is what makes phallos archetypal. No male had to learn phallos. It presents itself to him, as a god does. A male uses phallos; he is not a man if he cannot do so. Men need to know their source of authority and to respect their sacred symbol. Phallos opens the door to masculine depth."

So begins this amazing little book by Eugene Monick, a Jungian therapist from New York whose credentials include a Ph.D. from Union Graduate School and a diploma from the Jung Institute in Zurich. Monick

is concerned that as patriarchal society crumbles, we need to differentiate what is masculine from what is patriarchal. And he argues that it was Freud and Jung's emersion within a society where patriarchal attitudes were taken for granted that led them to underate the role of the father, to under-explore the nature of masculinity, and to over-endorse the mother (including the Great Mother) as the basis of the life of the psyche. In a stunning critique he shows that it is the unconscious patriarchal bias of present day psychotherapy that has led to the absence of a primal masculine principal in its theory.

The first two chapters in the book are concerned with making the case that phallos is deeply connected to religious experience in a man and to understanding its archetypal qualities. That phallos is an archetypal element in the male psyche is, I think, undeniable. It occurs to me that phallos may be the easiest route for a man to understand the idea of archetype. Men know that we have very little control over when phallos decides to make himself known; few of us are able to reliably choose when and when not to have an erection. We have this physical evidence that there is some force inside us that has it's own agenda and has no interest in what is socially acceptable or what we consciously think we want or don't want. That's what an archetype is – that force. In most cases we don't have something as obvious as a hard-on to know

when an archetype is pushing us from below.

In the next two chapters Monick applies his reasoning to psychotherapy. Monick shows how both Freudian and Jungian theories are flawed by placing the mother, and especially the Goddess or Great Mother, at the center of life and death, and by implicitly or explicitly equating the unconscious with the feminine.

"A problem can surface for a mature man in Jungian analysis. He is encouraged to move beyond his ego attainments in the direction of the unconscious as man's place of origin. If origin is understood only as feminine, male resistance is understandable... A man either remains where he is, bereft of the depths, or he gives in to the depths and surrenders what he has sought long to attain. Phallos as god-image provides a solution to this quandary. Unless phallos is lodged independently in the depths of the unconscious, there is no masculine source to which a man can resort and depend upon as he moves beyond ego attainments toward a return to his beginning."

We tend to see the Great Mother, like Mother Earth, as the source of life. We forget that just as important as the Mother is the seed, and the seed comes from Phallos. Monick's central message to therapists is the need to make this primal masculine
Continued next page

source of life co-equal with the feminine.

Further chapters deal with patterns of phallos as revealed in mythology, the shadow side of phallos, homosexuality, and phallic energy in women. Of special importance is Monick's insights about relations between men and the crucial role male bonding has in the development of mature masculine identity. Though Monick interlaces his scholarship with personal anecdotes and stories, this is not always an easy read. It will appeal most to those who are already familiar with Jungian psychology. It is a must read for therapists who do soul work with men. For those of us who feel that western psychotherapy is overly 'feminized,' Monick helps us understand why so few men go into psychotherapy and offers some new paths and images toward a mature, masculinized psyche.

"(Phallos) is the ancient image needed by men today as they experience the disintegration of patriarchal Present Consciousness. Surrender to reemerging matriarchy is not the solution... It is regressive and will produce, eventually, a stringent reemergent patriarchal attitude in vain defense of masculine identity. There is no need for males to fear females and act out such fear as tyrant or slave once a primary-process inner connection with phallos is engaged and dependably functional."

Searching For Father

Stephen Read

*My Father – A Weak Bully, Little Man With An Enormous Rage
I sit here and try to write about my father and a blank daze comes
over my mind – so what does that say? I have never accepted
initiation away from the mother, I have not broken the bond, as a
child that is something the father can help to do. It did not happen. I
still get involved with hurt women, little girls really, just like mother.*

I AM MY FATHER'S SON, FORTY YEARS OLD
A TALL SKINNY MAN WITH A BROKEN HEART

*Drums and darkness, a search for the father is on! Over two hundred
men, all shapes, sizes and ages; drumming, dancing and singing,
leaving their past outside the space the drummers have created with
their passion.*

FATHER?
FATHER? WHAT IS FATHER?
SITTING IN A PLUSH OFFICE
A KINDLY MAN SAYS
YOU TALK ONLY OF MOTHER
AND I SAY, "WELL THEN
WHERE IS HE?"
THE REPLY. "YOU NEVER HAD ONE."

BLANKNESS

*Father, my father, you were a dream, a nightmare that filled the
emptiness of a young mans' heart. How can these men on the
platform ask me to tell another about you, and then I did and heard
my story come out of another mans' mouth. The world I inhabited
was filled with a woman's view, not wrong, just not mine. As I had
no father, I thought I should hang on to what I knew. A fatal error.*

A-Void

*I clung to her apron strings
hoping she would save me,
there was nowhere to go.
Didn't know you should be there
she said you are an ogre,
and tied me to her breast.
Now, in middle age, the nipple hardens
not from passion but from death.
Life is beating once again
and father, it is you I need
in my heart.*

To get close to our fathers we are asked to feel his pain, his wound, to see how similar it is to our own. We are asked to look, with our imagination, into our fathers heart, his room that he kept secret from us, from everyone.

My Father's Room

Hadn't thought about
my father's room.
Until it was mentioned,
I didn't remember he had one.
So I looked
Grandfather was in there, my
father's yearning for his love.
Beauty was in there too;
in all its forms:
Woman
Music
Nature
Friendship.
There is a mirror on the wall.
I looked into it, saw myself, got
scared.
Have I lived my fathers life, for
him?
So who am I?
And what is my life?

And there it was, I had believed
the myth that I had to fail just like
my dad. It hurt so much to feel
that just like him, who had shut
his father out, I had repeated the
same story. Father was bad, so,
therefore, men were bad. Father
was a failure, father was a man, I
am a man, therefore I am a failure.

I wrote a letter to my father,
praising all the strengths in him
that made him survive. He did
not reply. I no longer search for
him outside my self, for in so
many ways my father and I are
one. I am my father's son.

Beginnings (Continued from Page 3)

Self-consciously, eagerly, I walk up to a vacant drum and begin, imitating those around me until I fall into the same rhythm. The sound from the drums is so space filling that I cannot hear the large drum before me. I feel pleasure, release and excitement as I pound the drum. I feel the beat in my arms, in my chest and down my back. The sensations fill me and I experience a new sensation of coming into my body, of leaving my head. When we stop there is a feeling of comforting exhaustion. Looking around seeing the smiles on the other faces I realize I have one too. And in that moment I am connected to them.

There was a distinct flavour of maleness and power about the drumming, something I hadn't encountered in a long time, if at all. But it felt familiar. The drumming was in the now. It was in my body. The sensation of connectedness to the others continued afterwards. I had always associated camaraderie with working to produce a product, usually concrete, and yet this product was gone as soon as we stopped. Products had not brought connectedness.

The rest of the day was filled with activities, most involving participation, which explored areas I had pushed away and others which were completely new. I had been randomly grouped with eight other men and we sat together at our own table for dinner. They brought

needs but I was unable to express mine. At the close of the day, with the whole group sitting in our jury-rigged lecture hall, we were told our next day's itinerary. Our small group was to go to the sweat lodges. What the hell's a sweat lodge? Cleansing of body and mind? Too weird. I can't even stand the oppressive heat of a sauna for more than a couple of minutes. One of our small group declined. The visceral unease returned.

Here I am, standing in the middle of a clearing in the woods in February, naked, looking across the large fire at thirty other naked shivering men. I'm exposed and feel vulnerable. This brings up bad childhood dreams. At least this time I'm not the only one exposed. I shift my weight from foot to foot as the thin snow underfoot melts and changes to mud. The cold in my feet and on my back is countered by the heat on my front; sort of like baking on a spit. I'm tempted to turn around to warm my back but I'm too self conscious to break the locked arms.

We're directed to the canvas, leather and wood domes, one for each small group. Stooping as I enter, I have to be careful not to head-butt someone else's bare ass. No dignity. There is very little space and unknowingly I end up in the circle furthest from the entrance where I drop my ass on the
Continued next page

ground. We sit in this tight circle as hot rocks are carried and sometimes rolled into the hole in the centre. The door flap is dropped and we are in total darkness save for the dim glow from the rocks. Heat rolls off the rocks. I lean back but the wall is cold to the touch. Someone mentions that if it gets too difficult to breathe lowering your head helps. Someone suggests we hold hands. Someone begins to talk. I'm disconnecting into the dark but something in the last voice slowly brings me back.

Listening to the emotion in his wavering words I hear his emotions. In spite of, or possibly because of, the physical duress I hear his emotions in my body. The pain, my pain, the pain locked in my body, is triggered by his. As each man speaks I open up and tears well up. My turn comes and I strain to talk. The heat feels unbearable. Words spill out in slow motion. I reveal my inability to feel, to grieve my losses, my emptiness. And I begin to sob, tears come as freely and uncontrollably as the sweat. So many loved ones around me have died and I feel empty and lost. My mother, my father, my childhood playmates, my beloved grandmother and my childhood emotional companion, my dog, are dead. I cry for the many years since childhood I've not allowed tears to come. The door to acknowledging loss is thrust open.

One or two hours have passed and I'm nearing exhaustion. I have an overpowering need to


head for the door flap, willing to crawl over my companions. Just then the door flap is opened and we crawl out. I have no strength. It's so bright I place my hand over my eyes. Somebody cries, "Head for the river." Teetering like a tree being felled, I can barely stand. I head for the sounds and crash into the undergrowth, dully realizing I've missed the trail. Scratching myself all over, I eventually reach the river. It is shallow and I lurch forward into the current, settling on my stomach across rounded rocks. On the bottom, cold water flows around and over me, sort of like a beached whale. It's so cold I can't help thinking of all the beer cans I've cooled off this way. After a minute or so I look up to see a dozen or so men in the shallow water, many in the same posture I've taken. How insane. Looking at their pink skins I can't help thinking of a new species of spawning salmon. I say so and we laugh. It comes easily for us there. Everything is far away. So simple.

I sensed, as the next two days passed, a collective warrior energy, a group soul that built around us and Meade and Moore. The antics became more offside and less threatening. On the third night Robert Bly arrived. We did not welcome him. He felt and named this, bringing us up against our unconscious wall of exclusion. We backed off to make space. Naming was very powerful. His presence expanded our group soul with other

elemental forces, bringing more balance. But that night was memorable for me because of the man who came with him and stayed for just that night.

When the poet William Stafford entered the room my heart froze. It was my father. So alike in appearance from a distance that my wife seeing his picture on a book cover a year later was to experience the same reaction. Recovering, I await his reading. When it comes I'm taken back to childhood, to the times spent outdoors with my father, to the poetic simplicity. I recall the man from my childhood who had nothing to say to me around the house, who magically transformed when he took me to the woods. I remember his smile.

At the closing a couple of days later the farewells were powerful and exhausting. I had never been this close to any man, never mind a group. Shortly after the farewells I discovered that my grieving was to be experienced on a physical level also, as my body collapsed and committed me to bed for a week.

Doors were opened during that five days that I'm still exploring two years later. Many of those doors have led to others and I'm beginning to know who I am below all that inherited shit. I still struggle to stay in the moment and in my body. I now seek the company of men on a meaningful level. I'm grateful that the empty feeling is being replaced. 

To Women, As Far As I'm Concerned (D.H. Lawrence)

*The feelings I don't have I don't have.
The feelings I don't have, I won't say I have
The feelings you say you have, you don't have
The feelings you would like us both to have, we neither of us have.
The feelings people ought to have, they never have.
If people say they've got feelings, you may be pretty
sure they haven't got them.
So if you want either of us to feel anything at all
you'd better abandon all idea of feelings altogether.*

*A living man is blind and drinks his drop.
What matter if the ditches are impure?
What matter if I live it all once more?
Endure that toil of growing up;
The ignominy of boyhood; the distress
Of boyhood changes into man;
The unfinished man and his pain
Brought face to face with this own clumsiness;*

*The finished man among his enemies? —
How in the name of Heaven can he escape
That defiling and disfiguring shape
The mirror of malicious eyes
Casts upon his eyes until at last
He thinks that shape must be his shape?
And what's the good of an escape
If honour find him in the wintry blast?*

*I am content to live it all again
And yet again, if it be life to pitch
Into the frog-spawn of a blind man's ditch,
A blind man battering blind men;
Or into that most fecund ditch of all,
The folly that man does
Or must suffer, if he woos
A proud woman not kindred of his soul.*

*I am content to follow to its source
Every event in action or in thought;
Measure the lot; forgive myself the lot!
When such as I cast out remorse
So great a sweetness flows into the breast
We must laugh and we must sing,
We are blest by the everything,
Everything we look upon is blest.*

From A Dialogue of Self and Soul, by W.B. Yeats

The Father and the King: Conflict and Choice

*Sunday, May 26th, 1991
10am — 5pm
2021 Columbia Street, Van.
Fee: \$10.*

In Robert Bly's seven step model of masculine development, bonding with the father and breaking with the father are the third and fourth steps. In this workshop we will get in touch with our flesh and blood fathers and explore the nature of the 'archetypal father.'

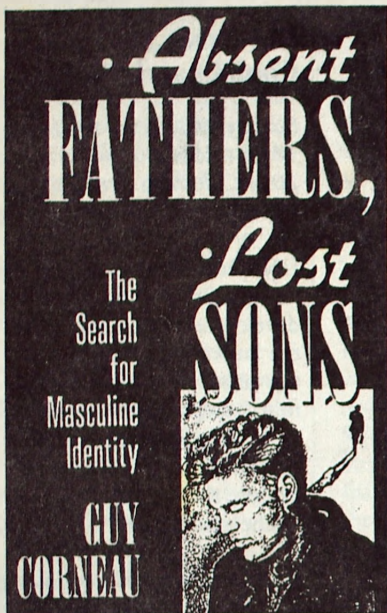
Mike Raynolds is a counselor with Vancouver Family Services, where, in addition to his private counseling, he runs men's groups.

Doug McKegney, founder of the *Grunt*, has been an active voice in the men's movement in Vancouver for many years.

Storytelling Group

We are in the process of setting up an ongoing storytelling group. We will start by using stories that speak to us as men, into our hearts, then work with the archetypes to deepen our understanding of what they mean personally and collectively.

For more information, please contact George at 736-2956.



VANCOUVER M.E.N.

presents a workshop with

GUY CORNEAU

ABSENT FATHERS, LOST SONS:

The Search for Masculine Identity

A public lecture, and a workshop for men

Friday, June 14, 7:30 p.m. Robson Square Conference Centre (men and women) Saturday and Sunday, June 15 & 16,

9 a.m. - 5 p.m. UBC Student Union Building

Guy Corneau is a well known speaker on men's issues in Quebec and in Europe, and has been a Jungian analyst in Montreal. His book, *Absent Fathers, Lost Sons*, is now published in English after becoming a best seller in French. We look forward to a fascinating learning experience.

The workshop will be experiential and participative. It is limited to 60.

Tickets: Friday Lecture: \$12, at Banyen Sound or at the door;

Workshop: \$150, by mail from Vancouver M.E.N., 3392 W. 34th Ave., Vancouver V6N 2K6 **For information call 290-9988.**

Gods in Bodies: Men and Women / Mars and Venus

A weekend workshop for men and women, utilizing dance and movement.

James Hillman

Formerly Director of Studies at the Jung Institute in Zurich, James Hillman is the author of *Re-visioning Psychology*, *The Puer Papers*, *The Dream and the Underworld*, and recently, *A Blue Fire*. He regularly leads men's retreats with Robert Bly and Michael Meade. Hillman's archetypal psychology transcends more traditional approaches by blending myth, language and imagination in psychotherapy.

Debra McCall

A psychotherapist and choreographer, Debra McCall has recently returned to the United States from living in Rome, where she heads the Art Therapy Italiana training program. Debra is currently directing a program in Movement Analysis and Imaginal Psychotherapy in New York. She is collaborating with James Hillman in a series of workshops which explore the choreographic idiosyncrasy and aesthetic form of archetypal and mythic material in our lives.

September 28 (9:30am-5:30pm) and 29 (9:30am-4:00pm), 1991

Fee: \$200. Limited enrollment. Early registration recommended.

For more information, please call Vancouver M.E.N. at (604) 290-9988.